

**California Historical Records  
Statewide Planning Project**

**State Government Records Assessment Report**

**History Associates Incorporated  
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# ***California Historical Records Advisory Board State Government Records Assessment Report***

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:***

As part of the California Historical Records Statewide Planning Project, the California Historical Records Advisory Board contracted with History Associates Incorporated to conduct an assessment of California State Archives (CSA) programs. This report evaluates the current status of CSA programs and recommends possible areas for improvement. The following programs are included in the assessment: accessioning, administration and organizational structure, appraisal and processing, automation, the California Legislative Archives Program, preservation as it relates to the CSA and its microfilm and preservation laboratories, the Oral History Program, reference and access, security, and the Western Archives Institute. In addition to assessing the programs of the State Archives, the report also discusses the relationship of the CSA with four other state agencies/organizations, including the Golden State Museum, the California State Library, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California Department of General Services Records Management Program.

The assessment of State Archives programs indicated that while several programs are operating well, such as the Western Archives Institute, or are too new to evaluate at this time, such as the California Legislative Records Program, other programs would benefit from minor or major procedural, organizational, or staffing changes. Several significant problems were identified by the assessment. These include the backlog of unprocessed records, the organization and size of the staff, the imbalance between access and preservation in Archives programs (one example of which is the increasing isolation of the preservation and microfilm laboratories), and the tension between the State Archives and other state agencies that are responsible for preserving the state's history and/or managing its records. The most pressing problem facing the Archives is the backlog of unprocessed records that comprises approximately thirty-five percent of the Archives' total holdings. Some collections have remained unprocessed for almost three decades. Reducing the processing backlog should begin as quickly as possible and the CSA needs to allot the budget and staff required to make this happen.

Another major issue is the distribution of the CSA staff and its size. At present the CSA's organizational hierarchy is flat and archivists have no career ladder. The CSA should work with the Secretary of State to adopt the recommendations of the recent classification study. Implementation of these recommendations would add a senior archivist (supervisory or specialist) class and a paraprofessional class to the Archives' organizational structure and provide archivists with a career ladder, as well as a more rational division of responsibilities.

Staffing size is also a problem. Several programs are inadequately staffed due to the need to increase the Archives staff overall and the need to fill vacancies among both archivists and support staff. The programs most in need of additional staff are processing,

reference, and preservation (in the broadest sense). Existing staff needs to devote more of their time to processing and new staff should be hired to work exclusively on processing activities, so that together they can reduce the processing backlog. The reference program also needs additional staff to improve both public service and security in the reference room.

The preservation program shares the need for additional staffing with other Archives programs. But preservation also has a more significant problem. At present access holds a higher priority for most archivists at the CSA than preservation. The most visible aspects of the preservation program, namely the preservation and microfilm laboratories are increasingly isolated from other Archives programs. The CSA needs to reverse this trend by giving preservation a higher priority. One option is to raise the organizational status of preservation by hiring a preservation curator to supervise both laboratories, as well as other preservation activities at the Archives. Once the preservation program has been reintegrated into the Archives organization, the CSA should consider expanding the preservation program by providing additional technical staff and allowing the laboratories to provide preservation and microfilming services to other state agencies and the public on a contract or charge-back basis. This would provide a needed service, as well as improving the Archive's image among other state agencies.

A final significant problem for the CSA is the way it is viewed by other state agencies. The relationship the CSA has with agencies that share its responsibilities for preserving the state's history and managing the state's records is starting to improve. However, several steps could improve that relationship even more. The most important step would be to demonstrate that the unprocessed backlog of state agency records is being reduced and to inform affected agencies that reduction of their records is a priority for the Archives. Once records have been processed, the CSA should distribute new collection finding aids to stakeholder agencies. A second major step would be for the CSA to cooperate with the California State Library and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to clarify and agree on the collecting area parameters of each of the three organizations.

The California State Archives enjoys an enviable facility, experienced and motivated staff, and significant historical collections. In the current positive economic climate, the Archives has the opportunity to redefine itself and to become a model of archival organization and management for other archival repositories and local government records programs throughout California.

### ***METHODOLOGY:***

History Associates was represented by Dr. Gabriele Carey, who conducted an assessment of California State Archives facilities and programs during two site visits, the first from July 17 through 21, 2000, and the second on September 28, 2000. The assessment was conducted to inform the State Historical Records Advisory Board and CSA management and staff of the current status of CSA programs, staffing, and

interactions with other state agencies/organizations and to identify areas that would benefit from improvements. The assessment consisted of interviewing CSA staff members regarding the various Archives programs in which they are involved, as well as examining archival storage, processing, reference, preservation, microfilming, and office areas. The following individuals were consulted as part of the assessment of CSA programs: The Chief of the Secretary of State, Archives and Museum Division, Walter Gray; the Assistant Chief, Archives and Museum Division, Jerry Hill; archivists Melodi Andersen, Sydney Bailey, Linda Johnson, Blaine Lamb, Laren Metzger, Genevieve Troka, and Nancy Zimmelman; program analyst Julia Calef; document preservation technicians Anne Mason and Juan Ramos; microfilm technicians Deborah Robinson and Sandra Smith; and Pat Todesco of Information Technology.

Dr. Carey also interviewed staff of the Golden State Museum, the California State Library, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California Department of General Services Records Management Program to assess the relationship between these organizations/agencies and the State Archives. The following individuals were interviewed as part of the assessment of state agencies involved in the collecting and management of the state's history and records: Ross McGuire and Amanda Meeker of the Golden State Museum, Gary Kurutz of the California State Library, Pauline Grenbeaux and Victoria Yturalde of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Melodie Cato, Joe Barajas, and Fernando Villanoweth of the DGS Records Management Program.

### ***ASSESSMENT OF CALIFORNIA STATE ARCHIVES FUNCTIONS:***

In 1995, the State Archives completed its move into a new facility designed to meet all archival facility standards in place in 1995, including environmental controls and security systems. The facility is well-designed, attractive, and provides ample room for the Archives' current needs, as well as room for expansion in the future. The Archives now occupies four floors of the five-floor structure and shares several floors of the building with the Golden State Museum. The Archives has a capacity of 140,000 cubic feet. At present it contains 77,000 cubic feet and is at fifty-five percent of capacity. The CSA has twenty-seven positions that include two management/supervisory positions, eleven archivists, two program analysts, one executive assistant, two document preservation technicians, two microfilm technicians, and seven office technicians and office assistants. Not all of these positions are filled at the present time. Several CSA functions, such as preservation and microfilming, are located in state-of-the-art facilities. Most other functions are housed in areas that feature an appropriate division and allotment of space and up-to-date technology. An assessment detailing the strengths and weaknesses of each of the CSA's functions follows.

#### **Accessioning/Processing:**

Accessioning and processing are crucial archival functions, since their proper execution will determine whether an archives has intellectual, physical, and legal control

over its collections, as well as whether those collections can be made available to the public efficiently and securely. At the CSA, the accessioning function is working well, but the processing function appears to have all but broken down. As a result, the CSA's backlog of unprocessed records accounts for more than thirty-five percent of the CSA's total holdings. This situation has several serious consequences, including the reluctance of state departments to send records to the CSA where they may not be processed for years and the limited accessibility of unprocessed records to researchers.

### Accessioning

The accessioning process at the CSA appears to function quite well. Accessioning policies and procedures are compiled in the "Collections Management Procedures Manual" and staff oversight is provided by the accessioning coordinator. The coordinator has several responsibilities, including the assignment of staff to ensure that sufficient hours are devoted to accessioning, the suggestion of new accessioning policies, the completion of administrative support tasks such as writing monthly reports and updating the accession database, and the training of new staff and graduate interns in accessioning procedures. Approximately six staff members and/or graduate interns work part-time at accessioning tasks. Staffing levels in the accessioning function average 1.5 person years. This level of staffing appears to be adequate, since most acquisitions are accessioned within a few days to a month. At its worst, the accessioning backlog is less than 200 cubic feet. This means that adequate documentation exists for all but a fraction of the unprocessed materials.

The CSA uses a team approach when performing accessioning tasks to ensure that appropriate decisions are reached. If staff concludes that an entire records series does not have historical value, the accessioning coordinator and one or two accessioning archivists review the series and make the final accessioning/disposition determination. If the accessioning team concurs that the series has no historical value, the CSA appraisal archivists will be notified, so that they can remove the CSA "flags" signifying that state records may have historical value from the relevant departmental records retention and disposition schedules.

Accessioning policies and procedures are defined in the "Collections Management Procedures Manual." This manual has been approved by management, but has not been fully implemented, although all CSA staff should be aware of its contents. The manual contains appropriate forms and procedures to ensure that the CSA's accessioning function complies with archival standards. The manual provides a clear and detailed presentation of each step involved in the accessioning process. Provided that the manual is implemented by accessioning staff, it will ensure that accessioning tasks are completed consistently and properly so that the CSA's unprocessed collections are adequately documented.

When collections are received by the Archives, they are entered in a log book to document that they have physically arrived at the Archives. During accessioning, staff completes a number of tasks. They gather basic information about the materials (i.e.,

series titles, contents, volume, and inclusive dates) which is then entered into the bound Accession Ledger and onto Accession Worksheets in MARC format. The Accession Ledger documents all the Archives' transfers, gifts, acquisitions, loans, and dispositions. The Accession Worksheets provide more information than the Ledger and are entered into the Master Location Database once a month to provide all CSA staff with access to unprocessed collections. Staff also assigns accession numbers, determines where accessioned collections will be located, rehouses materials in acid-free/lignin-free boxes made by support staff, and affixes standard labels (either preprinted or produced using an MS Word template) to boxes. Preservation problems (i.e., mold damage) are identified and noted during accessioning.

In addition, accessioning staff separates duplicates, records in certain formats, artifacts, confidential records, publications, clean white paper, and common trash from the collection. Separation sheets are completed and filed in the collection in place of the separated records and artifacts to document their provenance and new location. Artifacts are for use by the Golden State Museum and are thus accessioned separately using a different type of accession number from that used by the CSA. Despite the separate accession systems, artifacts do not become the property of the Golden State Museum, which is a private entity, rather, they remain the property of the state of California. Confidential records not retained by the CSA are sent to the Department of General Services Records Center confidential records destruction program. Publications will either be transferred to the CSA Staff Library or offered to the California State Library which has responsibility for retaining state and local government publications.

While most aspects of the Archives' accessioning function adequately meet the goals of ensuring the CSA has intellectual, physical, and legal control over its collections, as well as of preparing records for processing, there are three areas in which improvements are warranted. These areas include the lack of provision in the building's design for storage of bulky archival supplies (i.e., boxes and folders), lack of control by the CSA over access to the accessioning area, and inconsistency in collection identifiers. When the CSA building was designed, storage areas for pallets of acid-free/lignin-free containers, folders, and other supplies were not incorporated into the design. As a result, part of the accessioning space is used for the storage of such supplies. At present, this is only a minor irritant, but lack of storage areas for archival supplies may become a real problem when the CSA facility nears capacity.

Access to the accessioning area (and other areas of the CSA) is a more immediate concern. Although the building itself and areas within it are quite secure, the fact that CSA staff do not have control over who has access to the accessioning area is troubling. Vendors, engineers, janitors, and others are given free access to restricted areas, such as the accessioning area, by executive management. This access generally takes place during working hours, but it is still a concern.

A final issue is the Archives' numerical identification system which lacks consistency, since there have been various systems of numerical identification in use over the years. For example, accession numbers are now used as identification numbers, where

in previous years, two separate numbers were assigned. The older identification systems continue to be used for the older accessions alongside the newer systems used with more recent accessions. If the cost is not prohibitive, bar coding of all collections in the CSA on a box level might permit the establishment of a universal identification system. Bar coding would permit a higher level of administrative control over CSA collections than other methods, but should be considered along with other automation planning issues.

### Processing

While accessioning is working well, processing has been less of a priority for CSA staff. More than thirty-five percent of the Archives' collections are part of the unprocessed backlog and the backlog continues to grow. Many factors account for the existence of the backlog, including those related to construction of the new CSA facility, the diversion of staff time into other programs, staffing cuts, and the lack of a processing mandate. Most of these factors can not be used to explain the continuing growth of the backlog, however. After five years in the new CSA facility the extra work involved in moving the collections (twice!) has now ended and enough time has elapsed for CSA staff and programs to have established a routine. That routine should permit additional time to be devoted to processing tasks. Now that the Golden State Museum is designed and the exhibits have been installed, this source of additional work for archivists has also decreased. Staffing levels are still a problem and additional staff are needed to adequately cope with the existing workload.

While the level of staffing partly explains why archivists have not reduced the processing backlog, the major reason is that processing is not a priority for most archivists. Archivists, as professional staff, are not given set hourly assignments, except in the Reference Room. This means that, although in theory, all archivists are expected to spend time processing records, in practice, only one archivist appears to be meeting this obligation. During seven days spent in the CSA during assessment visits, processing was only observed on two of those days (both times being conducted by the same lonely archivist). Although there are many demands on the archivists' time, given the critical proportions of the unprocessed backlog, processing should be a high priority.

The consequences of continuing to neglect the backlog of unprocessed records are serious, involving negative impacts on appraisal, outreach, and accessibility. The appraisal function suffers, because the backlog means that archivists are unsure of what is already in the CSA and therefore do not know what the CSA still needs to collect. Outreach to state agencies suffers also. Agencies are unwilling to transfer materials to the CSA, because they cannot be sure those records will be accessible in any reasonable period of time. In fact, many agency records have been part of the unprocessed backlog for decades. By not focusing on reducing the backlog, the CSA risks alienating its constituency and eventually isolating itself. Another aspect of the deteriorating relationship with other state agencies is the danger this situation presents to the records themselves. If state agencies retain their own records in less than adequate environments and without a minimum of intellectual and physical control, these records will be at risk of being damaged or lost. Additionally, as state records are increasingly retained by their



creating agencies, the CSA may find that its position is weakened when requesting funding.

Another consequence of the huge backlog is its impact on accessibility. Unprocessed records should not be made available to researchers, due to the Archives' lack of adequate intellectual and physical control over these records. To make unprocessed records available to researchers is to put those records at risk. Since the unprocessed backlog is so large and so longstanding, however, the CSA has no real option but to make the records available to researchers. This problem is even more serious for those records in the backlog that were received prior to the establishment of the accessioning procedure. Because these records have not been accessioned or processed, neither CSA staff nor researchers have any clear knowledge of their existence or content. The CSA cannot win in this situation, since to make the records available puts them at risk, while to limit their accessibility would result in an unacceptable strain on public service (and relations).

One way of assisting archivists in devoting more time to processing tasks would be an upgraded training program and a definite assignment of hours per week that must be spent processing records. At present, graduate interns receive training in processing tasks, but staff do not. Since staff lacks training in processing, they are understandably insecure when faced with boxes of unprocessed materials and this leads them to make processing their lowest priority. The result is that a lack of training goes hand-in-hand with a lack of experience. Without a mandate to ensure that archivists spend time processing, it is unlikely that the situation will change.

Another deficiency in the processing program is the lack of written processing procedures. The "Collections Management Procedures Manual" should contain clear and detailed processing procedures, as well as accessioning procedures to provide guidance for staff when processing records. The "Steps in Processing" checklist is a step in the right direction, but it needs to be expanded to be really useful. A set of written procedures would do more than just make archivists more comfortable with processing tasks, it would also make the results of those processing tasks more consistent. At present, archivists make their own individual processing decisions and records are thus processed idiosyncratically, not systematically. One example of this process in action is the production of finding aids.

Several different types of finding aids are prepared for processed collections. They include subject cards in Library of Congress format that are added to the card catalog and subject and agency cards that are added to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). This ensures that information about processed collections is widely available. The third type of finding aid, however, the narrative finding aid (also called an archival inventory), is not consistent in format or content, nor does it meet the generally-accepted standard for archival finding aids, since it often does not include scope and content notes. The research and writing of agency histories and the preparation of complete records series descriptions have been considered to be more important by CSA staff, than has the preparation of scope and content notes. Consistency in finding aids is

becoming increasingly important, as more and more repositories are sharing their finding aids on the Internet. To take advantage of Web-based outreach to potential researchers, it is imperative that the CSA consistently prepare finding aids that comply with archival standards and lend themselves to sharing via the Web.

Attacking the backlog itself will be a daunting task. It will not be enough simply to train existing staff and mandate that they work a set number of hours per week at processing tasks (although these measures would certainly help keep the backlog from growing even bigger). To reduce the backlog will require additional resources. The first step should be to examine the backlog, so that unprocessed collections can be placed in priority order. The second step must be the hiring of additional processing staff. A proposal being considered for the Archives' 2001-2002 fiscal year budget would do just that. Under this proposal, the CSA would hire ten limited-term staff members for a period of three years. These individuals should have a college degree in a relevant field such as history or library science, as well as some processing experience. They would be trained and assigned to work only on processing tasks. To ensure that collections are processed consistently by everyone involved, permanent staff archivists should also be required to participate in the training program. Another option the CSA may wish to consider is that of contracting out processing activities. This removes the problem of hiring employees for a limited term.

Along with prioritized processing of collections and additional processing staff, the CSA might consider tackling some of the largest collections of unprocessed records first. It is clear that the processing of very large collections presents certain problems, including the difficulty of gaining an overview of the entire collection, the difficulty of working on the whole collection at once due to space considerations, and the possible demoralization of staff if too few staff members were assigned to process an extremely large volume of records. The completion of such a collection would provide important benefits as well, however. The two most important benefits of processing extremely large collections are that staff would be given the opportunity to work as a team to complete the project and that the completed processing of a large collection will cause the backlog to shrink in large batches.

### **Administration:**

The California State Archives is a division of the Secretary of State's Office. Division administration is the responsibility of the Chief of the Archives and Museum Division and of the Assistant Division Chief of the Archives and Museum Division. The division chief is primarily responsible for the setting of overall budget, policy, and goals within the division and for outreach beyond the division to budget allocators, other state agencies, the historical and archival community in California, and to the general public. The assistant division chief is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day administration of the division, including the supervising of CSA staff, resource allocation, and other administrative/management tasks.

## Organizational Structure

The administrative structure of the CSA appears to be working, although not as efficiently as it might be. Steps are already being taken to resolve the major problem, which is that the organizational hierarchy at the CSA is flat. There are only two supervisors in the division. Although both of these supervisors have strengths that contribute to the Archives' overall program, they are not archivists. Neither of the two professional archivist classes (Archivist I and II) are supervisory. There is also no paraprofessional class (i.e., an archives technician). Because the organizational hierarchy is so flat, archivists have no career ladder at the CSA. Those hired at the Archivist I level are typically promoted to the Archivist II level after a year. After that, there is no room for career growth within the CSA.

At the division chief's request, a classification study was completed in March 1999 to study the organizational and staffing situation at the CSA and to make recommendations for improvement. The implementation of the study's recommendations would insert additional levels in the Archives' organizational chart. A paraprofessional classification (i.e., archives technician) would be inserted below the archivist class, but above the office technician class. At the same time, a senior archivist class would be inserted above the archivist class. The senior archivists would be classified as either "supervisory" or "specialist." The Archivist I and II classifications would be eliminated. This change would provide the archivists with a career ladder, as well as allowing archivists to delegate the more routine aspects of archival work to staff members in the new paraprofessional class.

In addition, archivists would no longer be rotated among different functional areas, rather they would be assigned to particular functions such as reference, accessioning/processing, local government records, or governor records. In practice, even under the current system archivists have developed specialized expertise, but under the new system they would be officially encouraged to develop that expertise and would potentially be rewarded by being promoted to a senior archivist specialist position. The expectation is that these changes will begin to be implemented in the next year or two, since there is no provision for these changes in the current fiscal year budget.

## Space Allocation

Another issue related to the Archives' organizational structure is the architectural design of staff offices on the fourth floor of the CSA building that is based on a hierarchical model of staff organization, rather than on a team model. Offices on the south side of the fourth floor are designed as cubicles and were originally intended for lower-level archivists and staff. On the north side of the fourth floor are some separate (lockable) offices and some open cubicles. This suite of offices was designed to be used by upper-level archivists. Between these two suites of offices are the lobby, the Reference Room, and other support areas (Staff Library, genealogy library, conference room, and other spaces). Because of this division of office space, it is physically very difficult for archivists to work together in teams. Nor can office assignments be made by

classification as originally intended, since all but one of the twelve archivists are in the same classification. The only division seems to be by seniority, rather than classification, with long-time professional staff assigned offices on the north side and more recent professional staff assigned offices on the south side.

Two possible options for improving the division of office space are to follow the original space allocation scheme and reassign offices by classification, once additional classifications have been added to the organizational chart or to reconfigure the office space entirely. Under the first option, supervisory senior archivists would be assigned the separate and lockable offices on the north side of the fourth floor, since they may need to hold private personnel-related discussions with staff. In order to facilitate a team approach to archives staffing and assignments, however, a better solution would be to reconfigure the design of the more spacious south side of the fourth floor to house all staff offices. To provide additional space on the south side, the staff lunch area and perhaps the staff library could be moved to the north side of the fourth floor. This physical arrangement would be more conducive to communication and collegiality among staff of all classifications, as well as allowing staff assigned to the same archival function (i.e., accessioning/processing or reference) to work together more easily.

### **Appraisal:**

The appraisal function is arguably the most difficult and among the most significant of the archivist's tasks. Archivists at the State Archives are responsible for appraising state agency records to determine their historical value and then flagging historical records series on agency records retention and disposition schedules so that these records series will be transferred to the CSA when eligible. When records collections and the records series in them are received by the CSA, they are appraised during accessioning and processing to determine which records should become part of the permanent collection and which should be disposed of by another method.

One of the appraisal archivists' tasks is to review records retention and disposition schedules prior to their final approval and to complete associated paperwork. During the review process, appraisal archivists remove outdated flags marking records previously thought to be historical (or that are no longer being created), visit agencies to view any records listed on the schedules about which there are questions, add flags to previously unidentified or newly created historical records, and notify the Department of General Services Records Management Program and agencies of their actions. Several problems are associated with this process, including the fact that the relationship between appraisal archivists and agencies is fairly passive. Contact between the two is made at the end of the process, not at the beginning. Appraisal archivists would be more effective if they could identify and mark historical records at the point of records creation.

A second schedule-related problem is that only fifty-five percent of agencies have current records retention and disposition schedules. In many cases, these schedules are not even for the whole agency, rather they are for one or more units within the agency. Appraisal staff lists departments that have current schedules on the CSA Web site. The

hope is that agencies with outdated schedules will be motivated to update their schedules so that they too will appear on the Web site. So far, not being listed has not been an efficient motivator. An alternative plan might be to urge an agency's records coordinator - each agency has a records coordinator to act as a liaison between the CSA appraisal archivists and DGS Records Management Program staff - to update the schedule. It is likely, however, that this may not be effective either, since there is a high turnover in these positions. Thus, a significant proportion of the coordinators are new to the position and do not know what they are supposed to do. The appraisal archivists attempt to reach (and teach) the agency coordinators by attending their quarterly meetings. The fact that the DGS Records Management Program has little clout with state agencies also weakens the resolve of agencies to update their schedules.

Appraisal archivists are also responsible for reviewing records on a quarterly basis that are due to be destroyed. In some cases, however, flagged records are destroyed by agencies, rather than being transferred to the Archives. In this case, appraisal archivists send a memorandum to the agency records coordinator, the responsible unit chief, the agency head, the DGS, and the state archivist. Since there are no sanctions in the records legislation, there are no real consequences faced by agencies that knowingly destroy historical records. The CSA can pursue those who destroy flagged records, but this is an extremely lengthy process that might make it even harder to gain agency cooperation.

The lack of agency cooperation extends beyond destroying historical records. Even when agencies wish to save historical records, they are reluctant to send these records to the CSA (as they are required to), because they view the CSA as a place where records go and then disappear. Part of the reason agencies perceive the CSA this way is because of the Archives' huge unprocessed backlog. Records really do "disappear" into the backlog - sometimes for decades. Another reason agencies are suspicious of the CSA is because they do not understand what the CSA is and does. A program of education and "marketing" by the CSA to state agencies might be helpful in alleviating anxiety. This education effort could also target the practice of some agency officials and staff who take records with them when they leave, not understanding that they are taking state property. This is a particular problem with appointed positions.

A final problem in the appraisal function is that the CSA has no real appraisal policy. A great deal of thoughtful consideration has been given to establishing such a policy in recent months by the Appraisal Task Force which researched and made recommendations regarding alternative methods of appraisal. The appraisal methods investigated by the Appraisal Task Force included the European model, documentation strategies, macro appraisal, the information systems concept, and the "black box" model. Among the conclusions reached by the task force was that the European model should be rejected, because it finds records values to be inherently irrelevant and instead uses records characteristics in reaching appraisal decisions. This is the opposite of the traditional American model which holds that the determination of a record's informational or evidential value based on its content and context is the essence of appraisal. As regards the documentation strategy model, the task force recommended that

documentation strategies are appropriate in some cases, but would require too large an investment of time and resources in others. The information systems model was deemed too new to be properly evaluated, but it was recommended that current work in this area should be considered, especially as it relates to the development of an electronic records program. The macro appraisal and “black box” models were seen as being related. The task force was particularly intrigued by the idea of appraisal based on the functions of records creators and recommended that appraisers investigate these approaches further and implement them in a pilot study in one agency. A final conclusion reached by the task force was that appraisal statements should be based on record group or collection-level documentation, not on series-level documentation, due to the prohibitive investment of time required by the latter.

A detailed discussion of the task force’s findings and recommendations can be found in a memorandum to the state archivist dated May 3, 2000. The conclusions reached by the task force appear to be sound and should be further investigated and implemented in the coming year or two. The information systems model should be given particular attention, as the appraisal of electronic records gains urgency with each passing year. Increasing numbers of records series are now being created in electronic format. If they are not properly appraised, they may well be lost. The DGS is working on guidelines for the scheduling of electronic records, but the CSA needs to be more involved in setting standards in this area. At present, however, there is no archivist on staff who has expertise in this area.

Despite the existence of problems, the appraisal function has come a long way in the past few years. Appraisal archivists now have an MS Access database that allows them to track all schedules and records flagged for the CSA. This has improved the Archives’ ability to keep informed about the status of agency records and to contact agencies in a timely manner. Goals for the future include a higher and more positive level of communication with agencies. In order to achieve this, the CSA needs to focus on increasing its outreach and education efforts to state agencies. Some steps are already being taken in this direction. Appraisal archivists now regularly participate in the training classes held by DGS Records Management for new agency records coordinators and in the quarterly records coordinator meetings. The state archivist has also participated in the state records forums. In addition, appraisal archivists offer to meet with or lead CSA tours for agency staff on an as-needed basis.

### **Automation (Information Technology):**

Information Technology is another division of the Secretary of State’s Office. One programmer is assigned to the Archives division and functions as a liaison with the Information Technology Division. The responsibilities of this programmer include defining the Archives’ automation needs and assisting the CSA to meet those needs. That assistance takes several forms, including writing feasibility study reports for automation applications that contain automation objectives, justifications and information, and cost requirements. Other tasks include reviewing automation systems, providing advice on automation problems (such as database design), and providing programming for in-house

databases and other automation applications. In the future, this function may also include Web site development and support, especially as regards interactive Web systems. At present, staffing for this function is adequate, because the programmer assigned to the CSA has access to Information Technology Division staff and consultants as needed. Once the CSA purchases an integrated automated archives system and it is fully operational, additional staff will be required.

The automation function is currently involved in selecting a vendor to provide an integrated automated archives system. The system currently under review will be able to produce MARC records and EAD coding. This would permit the CSA to standardize its finding aids and share them via the Internet, thus expanding public access to the Archives' collections. Once the automated system is installed, the Archives will need to consider whether they should continue providing information to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). The system's EAD coding capability will allow the Archives to provide access to its finding aids in full-text version on the Internet (not just summary statements about the collections as with RLIN). The automated system also has a records management module, but its interface with the rest of the system is small and it has other deficiencies as well. The module is designed to deal only with those records already in the CSA, not with those records that should be in the CSA. Nor does the module contain a records tracking feature as desired by appraisal staff to keep track of records flagged on records schedules. Imaging/digitization is not included in the system at present, but this capability may be added later, since the agency as a whole is beginning to digitize records. Before the CSA moves in the direction of imaging/digitization, several issues need to be resolved. The most important issue is for the Archives to clarify the objectives of any scanning activities. Another issue is whether imaging/digitization as a function should be centralized (like the microfilming function) or distributed to each division. Other issues include the appropriate uses for imaging/digitization and the media's longevity.

Other concerns related to archival automation and information technology include the need for CSA staff to gain access to up-to-date hardware and software (i.e., the latest personal computer, MS Office, the new accounting package in use by Management Services), the possibility of using bar coding technology to improve physical control over CSA collections, and the need to consider security in all aspects of information technology. At present, the Information Technology Division will keep control over security, since the security of election and voting information is a grave concern. There are several firewalls to preserve security of confidential data and systems. All data available to the public is located outside these firewalls as a copy on a server. Official data is inside the firewalls. One example of this is the Archives' participation in RLIN. RLIN exists outside the Archives' network on its own server. To communicate with RLIN, archivists send information across the firewall, but do not breach it.

### **California Legislative Archives Program:**

The California Legislative Archives Program is a new program that has only been in existence since July 1, 2000. The position of "Legislative Archivist" has been filled as of

September 1, 2000. The legislative archivist is responsible for coordinating the appraisal, arrangement, and description of legislative records at the CSA. Other duties include assisting legislators and their staffs with records management concerns and with transferring records to the CSA. The legislative archivist is also involved in education, outreach, and reference regarding the legislative records.

Since this program is so new, it is too early to assess its effectiveness. The most immediate goals, however, involve the preparation of finding aids to the legislative records and contacting legislators who are leaving office. At present, the only finding aid to the legislative records is a card file. Since there are over 500 collections of legislator/committee records (and growing), this is a long term project. Contacting legislators who are leaving office in order to assist them in transferring their records to the CSA is also a long term project, since term limits now ensure that a significant number of legislators will leave office at the end of each two year period. Other priorities are to ensure that information about the CSA will be included in the orientation of new legislators, providing records management guidelines for legislators and their staffs, and reevaluating the collection guidelines for legislative records.

### **Governor's Records Program:**

The purpose of the Governor's Records Program is to assist the Governor's office in the efficient management of its records, and to ensure the proper transfer and management of the public records after the Governor has left office. The program's authority is derived from the California Government Code, section 6268, which requires the Governor to transfer his/her public records to the State Archives upon leaving office. Since 1988, the State Archives has been the official repository for the public records of the Governor. State Archives staff assigned to the Governor's Records Program works with the Governor's office to carry out all program activities. Such activities include assisting the Governor's staff in developing and maintaining records retention and disposition schedules, creating and assisting with the implementation of policies and procedures for the regular transfer of records to the Archives, directing the management and preservation of gubernatorial materials housed at the Archives, and maintaining communication with the Governor's office on all records issues relating to the Archives. Other program duties include acquiring and managing other records and materials relating to gubernatorial administrations, representing the Archives at professional forums relating to the care of executive office records, and cooperating with Oral History Program staff by identifying individuals who may add to an understanding of California's governors.

This program generally appears to function well, but it must face the same major issue each time a new gubernatorial administration begins – namely, that the program can only function with the cooperation of the Governor's office. When program staff are provided easy access to Governor's office staff, then they can work to ensure the smooth transfer of the Governor's historically valuable public records to the State Archives. When program staff are not provided with access, they cannot complete their assigned tasks and the Governor's public records are at risk. Since 1988, the program has by-and-large



received the cooperation from the Governor's office that it needs to function properly. Only relatively minor problems have occurred. These problems primarily concern the need for a complete listing of records transferred to the Archives and the need to continually update new staff members on records scheduling and organizing. In the near future, it is also likely that program staff will need to deal with the issue of electronic records, as will all other State Archives staff.

### **Preservation:**

Preservation occurs on a number of levels at the State Archives. It is a management function in that basic decisions about how and under what conditions records should be stored need to be made at the management level. The CSA has an advantage over most archival facilities, since it was constructed specifically to house an archives and thus proper environmental controls and storage systems were planned into the structure during the design phase. The archives provides specialized storage for different types of records (i.e., flat storage or acid-free rolled storage for maps, flat storage for oversize bound volumes, separate storage for photographic prints and negatives, and a high security vault for the most valuable items). Each stack area has a separate climate control system that maintains the temperature and relative humidity at optimum levels and those levels are regularly monitored. The Archives collections stored in stack areas near the Museum collections are also potentially at risk, because museum items are often received at the Archives facility in dirty condition. These items are neither isolated from other materials, nor fumigated to eradicate pests. While fumigation is avoided due to concerns that the fumigating agent might harm staff members and the objects themselves, the Archives should investigate whether it might be possible to isolate suspect museum objects for observation to ensure that mold or vermin will not spread to other parts of the collection.

In addition to passive preservation through proper environmental conditions, the CSA also engages in active preservation in its microfilm and preservation laboratories. These laboratories are charged with specialized, technical processes that ensure historical information is preserved, either by creating a microfilm duplicate or by conducting conservation treatments on original documents containing historical information. The two laboratories have similar focuses, staffing classifications, and concerns.

### **Microfilm Laboratory**

The microfilm laboratory is staffed by two microfilm technicians and is primarily responsible for preservation microfilming for the CSA and for producing duplicate microfilm for other divisions of the Secretary of State's Office as part of the division's vital records program. When producing preservation microfilm for the CSA, master reels are stored in the CSA cold storage vault. After duplicating microfilm for other divisions, the master reels are returned to the divisions. Microfilming complies with ANSI microfilming standards and the lab has up-to-date equipment and appropriate supplies, although staff believes that the planetary camera should be replaced.

While the microfilm lab functions adequately on a day-to-day basis, it suffers from a lack of focus and leadership. Previously, an archivist served as the Archives' preservation officer and worked with staff in the microfilm lab and in the preservation lab. This facilitated the integration of the microfilm program into the overall archival program. Without a preservation officer to act as a liaison between the microfilm lab and other CSA programs, lab staff has become increasingly isolated from the CSA as a whole. Staff believes that professional staff no longer recognizes their role as trained and experienced specialists performing an important function. The lab's preservation function has also suffered, because the lack of a preservation officer has allowed the preservation focus of the microfilm lab to be weakened. One example of records that could benefit from preservation microfilming are legislative intent records. These are used constantly by researchers and are photocopied repeatedly. Before the records have deteriorated so much they can no longer be used, they should be microfilmed. Researchers could then use the microfilm and the originals would no longer be handled and photocopied on a regular basis. The majority of the work completed by lab staff at present is vital records duplicating work for other divisions. Even in the area of vital records duplicating, necessary tasks are not being completed by archivists. Most importantly, both silver halide masters and diazo duplicates are stored in the same place. This presents the risk that information contained on the microfilm reels will be lost in case of a disaster at the CSA.

Staff morale in the lab has suffered in the absence of a preservation officer, since none of the archivists are charged with the responsibility of focusing on the lab's concerns. Staff's major concern regards the future direction of the lab. At present, staff fears that the CSA plans to phase out microfilming functions. This would be unfortunate, given that microfilming is an important tool for both the preservation and the vital records programs. Next to paper, microfilm when properly processed and monitored has the greatest longevity of any medium.

Instead of phasing out the microfilming lab, CSA management should consider developing the lab into a money-making venture for the CSA. The lab already has the necessary equipment, skilled and experienced staff, and room for expansion for this to happen. With training for current staff to allow them to grow along with the microfilming program and with additional technicians, the lab could complete not only the necessary vital records duplication and refocus its efforts on preservation microfilming for the CSA, it could also move in the direction of conducting microfilming work on a contract or charge-back basis for other state agencies. This would allow for a much more efficient and productive use of the microfilming lab than at present. Additional staff would also make it possible for the microfilming program to spend time monitoring microfilm produced previously to ensure that it remains in good condition. Microfilm monitoring is a necessary part of any vital records or preservation microfilming program. Fulfilling all these functions will not be possible at current staffing levels, however, since two microfilm technicians can barely keep up with even the present duplicating workload.

## Preservation Laboratory

The preservation laboratory is housed in spacious, state-of-the-art facilities with the latest preservation equipment. It is staffed by two document preservation technicians and is responsible for preserving the CSA collection, conducting surveys of work needed in the CSA collection (i.e., a survey of bound volumes), monitoring environmental conditions in the stacks, and monitoring the condition of the Golden State Museum collection. Preservation staff also provides some preservation workshops and consulting services for outside agencies and the public, but has not treated items from outside agencies since the 1980s when the laboratory ended its practice of laminating documents. Current lab staff are trained in paper conservation and their work complies with American Institute of Conservation standards.

The belief that the microfilm lab is becoming increasingly isolated from other CSA programs is shared by preservation lab staff regarding the preservation lab. While microfilm lab staff believe the appointment of an archivist as preservation officer to act as liaison would help matters, preservation lab staff do not concur, since they believe the preservation officer was ineffective. Instead of an archivist with a number of other responsibilities serving as preservation officer, preservation lab staff would prefer the appointment of a paper conservator as curator. The curator would be the head of the preservation unit (which should include both the preservation lab and the microfilm lab) and would be responsible for preservation activities at the CSA such as assessing the preservation status and needs of the Archives' collections and overseeing the Archives' preservation functions. CSA management is currently in the process of studying the job classifications in the lab. Adding an additional preservation staff member and a curator is one of the proposals being considered. A curator in charge of the preservation lab would be professional, rather than technical, staff and would thus be on the same level as the archivists. Under the curator, the preservation unit should no longer be a subordinate unit, rather it should be on the same organizational level as the reference, accessioning/processing, and legislative records programs. Preservation staff believes this would give them a greater ability to recommend preservation measures to the archival staff and to ensure that the archives collections receive the care they deserve.

The two main aspects of archival responsibility are access and preservation. Both must be given equal attention if an archival program is to function properly. At the CSA, access is currently weighted more heavily than preservation. Reference staff (as well as researchers) need to be trained in the proper handling of archival materials, as well as to be directed to bring preservation problems to the attention of preservation staff in a timely manner. If this does not occur, records are made available to researchers until they deteriorate completely. The photocopying of records in the CSA collections at the request of patrons is another example of a problematic situation. Some records are requested by (and copied for) researchers more frequently than others. It subjects these records to harm from light exposure to photocopy them each time a researcher asks for a copy. Instead, the records should be photocopied once. All additional photocopies should be made from the master copy, to minimize light damage to the original documents.

The major conclusion that can be reached about both the preservation laboratory and the microfilm laboratory is that neither are being used to their fullest potential. Both require a broader vision of the role they play within the Archives organization and additional staff to carry out that vision. Appointing a curator to oversee both the preservation laboratory and the microfilm laboratory would be a positive first step. The preservation function as it relates to the Archives as a whole appears to have been lost over the past years. A curator who is on the same level in the organizational hierarchy (preferably in the new Senior Archivist class) as the upper level archivists would be able to provide balance, so that the Archives' preservation function would be given as much weight as its access function. The curator could take on those division-wide preservation tasks that are currently no one's responsibility, including drafting an annual preservation plan, as well as a disaster preparedness and recovery plan for the CSA to supplement the business recovery plan currently in effect for the divisions of the Secretary of State's Office.

At present, the preservation lab has lost its focus, in that it is doing little preservation of the CSA collections, rather, it is mainly engaged in mounting materials for Golden State Museum exhibits. This was certainly a significant task while the exhibits were under construction, but should now be only a minor part of what the preservation lab does. A parallel process is happening in the microfilm lab which is now focused primarily on vital records duplication at the expense of preservation microfilming. A professional and active preservation curator to head up a preservation unit, including both the preservation lab and the microfilm lab, would allow both labs to once again become integral parts of the CSA organization. One area in which the preservation lab could be of great assistance to another CSA program is in the Oral History program. The preservation lab currently has all the equipment needed to set up a book bindery. With the addition of a book binder on staff, the preservation lab could reproduce and bind oral history transcripts in-house, thus eliminating the need to contract with an outside vendor.

Once reintegration of the preservation and microfilm labs into the Archives organization has taken place, the CSA should consider taking the preservation unit one step further. Both the preservation lab and the microfilm lab have the potential to greatly expand their roles. Both are in large and well-appointed facilities. All these labs would need to become the western equivalent of the Northeast Document Conservation Center is additional staff. These labs could earn money for the Archives Division by performing contract microfilming and preservation work for other state agencies and the public. State agencies, such as the Department of Parks and Recreation, would welcome such a service, especially if the preservation lab could work with photographic materials as well as documents. The CSA preservation/microfilm labs could also take on an educational role by training new microfilm and preservation technicians, or perhaps even paper conservators. The CSA could establish a link with one of the local universities to train students in the art and science of preservation, just as they now train students as archivists. Such a program would be a service to the entire state of California, which currently lacks such a facility, as well as providing a positive marketing and public relations tool for the Archives.

## **Oral History Program:**

The Oral History program is the only function in which the CSA creates original historical records. The program has existed since 1987 and serves to document the history of state government by collecting the memories of persons active in government (i.e., legislators and agency staff). An archivist served as program coordinator and worked with the established university oral history programs (i.e., the programs at the University of California, Los Angeles and Berkeley, the California State Universities at Sacramento and Fullerton, as well as the Claremont Colleges) that contracted with the CSA to conduct the oral history interviews and prepare the transcripts. Prior to the economic recession of the early 1990s, the program received enough funding to produce fifteen to twenty completed oral history interview transcripts per year. At its low point during the recession, program funding was slashed to \$20,000 per year and only approximately two transcripts were produced per year. When the archivist holding the coordinator position resigned during that period, no one remaining on the CSA staff had an oral history background.

In the past two years, program funding has increased and will likely increase considerably more in the next fiscal year. Administrative interest has also increased in the recent past, especially since both the program partners at the university oral history programs and legislators have been vocal about the need to resume interviewing and preparing transcripts. This need becomes more pressing as individuals who should be interviewed grow older and as term limits expand the number of individuals who should be interviewed. Prior to returning the program to full operation, the CSA should review the focus and priorities of the program. Several steps should be taken prior to returning the oral history program to full operation. The CSA should reevaluate the thematic areas to be documented by interviews, so that current scholarly research areas are included. The CSA also needs to decide whether the program coordinator should be an oral historian or an archivist with oral history experience. If the decision is made to hire an oral historian, the CSA needs to decide if it should begin conducting some of its own interviews, or if it should continue contracting that work out to the partner institutions.

Once a new coordinator is on board, he/she can focus on shepherding the transcripts from draft to final, published version by encouraging interviewees to finish their editing of transcripts and by identifying an appropriate publisher for the transcripts. At present both the printing and the reproduction of transcripts is a problem. The publisher who currently handles transcript printing is very slow, since there is only one person on staff who can do the work and it is necessary to get a purchase order for each transcript reproduced. The coordinator should investigate whether another vendor might be faster or whether it might be possible to gain a waiver that would allow the CSA to have transcripts reproduced without first issuing a purchase order. As noted above, the coordinator could also examine the feasibility of having the preservation lab take on the function of binding and reproducing oral history transcripts with the hiring of a document preservation technician skilled in book binding. This could eliminate the need to contract with an outside vendor entirely.

Another issue is the underutilization of the transcripts. Along with the on-site guides in the Reference Room, the CSA Web site provides access to the transcript by interviewee name and by subject. These two methods of access, however, are not leading researchers to use the transcripts in their research. There are several other avenues of access that the CSA might explore. These include the standard on-line library catalogs available through the California State Library database. A number of oral history transcripts are already listed on these databases (i.e., Melvyl - the University of California library catalog) and the CSA should investigate whether their collection can also be listed. Mailing flyers announcing the program to university history departments might also help inform researchers about the availability of the transcripts.

A final issue is changing technology. The master tape of the interviews has always been stored on reel-to-reel tape, because this has been the highest quality tape available. It is becoming increasingly more difficult, if not impossible, to find reel-to-reel equipment. At the same time, the quality of cassette recorders has greatly improved. Since the CSA has no reel-to-reel equipment and can only play back cassette tapes, it seems reasonable that the policy of only using reel-to-reel tape for the master tapes should be reevaluated to permit using high-quality cassette tapes for this purpose. To further ensure that the master tapes remain in good condition, the CSA needs to establish a program of monitoring the master tapes for deterioration by periodically conducting visual inspections, as well as by rewinding the tapes.

## **Reference:**

The reference program responds to reference requests in person, by mail or e-mail, or by phone. A complete and detailed description of reference procedures can be found in the "Reference Support Program Procedures" manual and in the "Reference Program Procedures" manual. Two staff members are on duty at the reference desk at all times. These may be two archivists or a combination of an archivist and an intern or support staff member. In addition to the two staff members at the desk, an "on-call" person is assigned to reference duty at all times to retrieve and copy records. Duty schedules for reference room staffing are prepared by the reference coordinator and all archivists are required to serve at least one or two shifts per week at the reference desk. Approximately one-half of reference requests concern legislative intent. This area of research has grown rapidly in the past few years and has a negative impact on the ability of the reference staff to keep up with work in the reference room. To help minimize the staff time needed to support legislative intent research, the Archives should investigate whether it might be possible to form partnerships with legislative intent research contractors and the legal community. The next largest group of researchers is genealogists. They have a special resource at the State Archives in the genealogy room that houses a private genealogy library operated by the "Root Cellar-Sacramento Genealogical Society." Not only does the genealogy library help genealogical researchers, but the Society has been an important support group for the CSA. Other researchers come from the offices of other state agencies, from other divisions of the Secretary of State's Office, from various academic institutions, or are members of the general public.

Researchers must complete a researcher application in order to gain access to CSA collections. They are permitted to take pencils, paper, laptop computers, tape recorders, and typewriters into the reference room with them. In the interests of security and records preservation, all other materials must be placed in a locker outside the reference room. New researchers are shown how to handle records and how to safely mark records for copying. Only one box or a few folders at a time are brought to researchers. The remaining materials they requested are stored on a cart behind the reference desk until they are ready for it. If records are available on microfilm, researchers are required to use the microfilm rather than the original records. Security in the reference room is provided by means of two security cameras and monitors, as well as by the presence of staff members. The reference desk and the reception desk outside the reference room are both provided with panic buttons, in case of an emergency security or other situation.

Finding aids consist mainly of a binder containing master finding aids and accession worksheets for unprocessed materials. For some collections there are specialized finding aids such as name indices. The card catalog is also still active. For off-site researchers, CSA staff has submitted all the master finding aids to the Online Archive of California so that researchers may access them on the Internet. Series lists in the Archives have been submitted to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), so that this information may be shared with libraries all over the country. Unfortunately, these on-line catalogs are not available in the reference room, since no computers are available to the public. This gap in public service will be closed if current plans to place personal computers in the reference room to allow access to on-line catalogs and electronic records are implemented. Finding aids are also photocopied and mailed to off-site researchers.

Archivists spend no longer than thirty minutes on reference requests that have been mailed or phoned in to the CSA. For requests that would take significantly longer to fill, archivists recommend that researchers from distant locations hire local research historians or copy services to fill their requests. If time permits, Archives staff copy fifty pages of records while researchers wait; if more than fifty pages are required, the copies are mailed or faxed to researchers. There is a \$10.00 per item fee for vendor duplication of photographs and oversize materials like maps (in addition to the duplication charges) to cover the labor involved in preparing the items and sending them to the vendor. With prior arrangement, researchers may bring in flat-bed scanners and photocopiers and do their own scanning and copying.

Concerns in the reference program relate primarily to issues of staffing, security, and access. Staffing is adequate, but not optimal. When archivists are at the reference desk, they are constantly responding to research requests, answering telephones, and spending time researching to fill requests. That leaves little time to observe on-site researchers to ensure that records are being handled properly. Often, having two staff members assigned to the reference desk really means that one staff member is in the reference room dealing with the telephones and researchers, while the other is retrieving materials from the work rooms or conducting research. Currently, there is not even an official back-up staff member to assist at the reference desk when the reference room is extremely busy. This

means that public service and security both suffer while the two staff members on duty scramble to keep up with the workload, or attempt to pull in another archivist or support staff member. Having three staff members in the research room at all times would improve both public service and security.

Implementation of the recommendations of the Archives Classification Study would allow archivists to delegate some of the more routine reference-related tasks, such as responding to simple reference requests and observing researchers as they handle records, to paraprofessional staff. This would permit archivists to spend more time on complicated reference requests and on improving public service and security in the reference room. Implementation of the Classification Study recommendation that archivists discontinue their current practice of rotating between CSA programs and instead specialize in a particular area would also improve public service in the reference room. Currently, some archivists work in the reference room often and others seldom work there. Archivists who regularly work in the reference room are much more effective than those who do not, since they are completely familiar with reference room policies and procedures.

Another staffing issue concerns the reference room's open hours. At present, the reference room is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It would certainly improve public service if those hours could be expanded. This is especially true for researchers who come from a distance. It is expensive for them to remain in Sacramento and they would like to spend every possible minute completing their research. Many larger archival institutions are open from 8:00 or 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. (i.e., the National Archives branches in Laguna Niguel and San Bruno) to accommodate researchers. Some even have Saturday hours. To expand the number of hours the reference room is open, however, the CSA would need to hire additional reference room staff.

Security issues are related to staffing issues, since having additional staff in the reference room provides staff with more time to observe that researchers are following reference room rules. In the past, there have been problems with the security guards, but these have apparently been resolved. The size and configuration of the reference room itself creates a security problem, since it makes staff oversight a problem. The reference room is too big for staff, or even the security camera to be able to see the back of the room. One solution would be an additional security camera mounted to show the back of the room on a monitor at the reference desk.

The California Public Records Act guarantees that access is an issue for the CSA reference program. The act contains so many exemptions that the public's fundamental right to view information about their government is perforce inconsistently applied. There are policies to screen some records, but not other similar records. There is a great deal of ambiguity in internal access procedures, access procedures of other departments, and the law itself. Reference archivists are unsure whether they are permitted to provide access to restricted records for statistical research, if the creating agency is providing such access. In order to resolve the inconsistencies in the act and the ambiguities in the way the act is



implemented, it will be necessary to clarify the Public Records Act. To achieve this, however, the CSA will need to find an outside organization to sponsor such legislation.

### **Security:**

Security policies and procedures used to prevent unauthorized access to the CSA are described by the “California State Archives and The Golden State Museum at The California State Archives Security Manual.” According to the manual, “access to non-public areas will be limited to those persons needing access to carry out their duties.” A “Security Core Team” consisting of five staff members (the Archives and Museum Division Director, the Assistant Chief of Archives, the Security Coordinator, the Reference Coordinator, and the Museum Curator) has been designated to facilitate access to certain high-security areas of the Archives, to review security policies, and to report breaches of security to the proper authorities. Building access is controlled by means of both keys and computerized card keys. The assistant division chief controls the issuance of all keys and card keys.

Security guards are on duty twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week and conduct regular perimeter patrols of the Archives facility. Approximately thirty to thirty-five security cameras located throughout the building are monitored at the central security desk on the first floor. Cameras in the reference room are also monitored by reference room staff. The most sensitive items in the CSA are located in locked file cabinets in the High Security Vault. Only the five individuals on the Security Core Team have access to this vault. Other staff members must be accompanied by a member of the Security Core Team to gain access to the vault.

The security system at the CSA ensures that the archival collections are fairly secure from unauthorized access. This does not mean the system is perfect, however. For persons familiar with the system, it would be fairly uncomplicated to remove items from the stacks and from the building. Since statistically, most thefts from archival facilities are perpetrated by staff members, this is a real concern. A related matter is the fact that the Archives has no procedures covering what should be done in the event that archival materials are discovered to be missing.

The number of persons having access to restricted areas of the Archives (such as the stacks) also presents a security issue. Archivists do not control access to restricted areas within the Archives; executive management makes these decisions. At the time this information was compiled in September 2000, 104 individuals had access to restricted areas who were not employees of the Archives (the only area these individuals did not have access to was the high security vault). Non-Archives employees with access to restricted CSA areas include building engineers, building maintenance workers, vendors, contractors, Secretary of State staff (i.e., information technology analysts), janitors, and security guards. Although most of these persons are required to enter restricted areas in the Archives only during working hours, it is unclear whether this access is closely monitored and controlled or not. The number of individuals with access to restricted areas is cause for concern. Given the unique, irreplaceable, and often valuable materials located

in Archives stacks and other Archives areas, the division's executive management needs to act in accordance with the knowledge that the Archives is not like other divisions. A solution might be to allow archivists more input into who is allowed to have access to restricted areas of the Archives.

The Archives facility is designed to minimize the threat of other potential dangers to historical records such as fires and floods (from above or below). Vault areas are outfitted with a Halon fire suppression system. Extra Halon tanks are located in the Archives in case the tanks in the vaults discharge their Halon. The Archives is thus in a fairly secure position, even though Halon can no longer be purchased and the Archives has no maintenance contract for the Halon system. Areas of the Archives outside the vaults are equipped with a wet-pipe, zoned sprinkler system. Although some of the vaults have water detection systems, other Archives areas do not. To help prevent water damage to records in the event of water leaks, the lowest shelves in the stacks are raised three to four inches above floor level. Two measures that would lower the risk of water damage to CSA collections even more would be to raise the lowest shelves another two inches (the archival standard is six inches above floor-level) and/or to provide a water detection system throughout the stacks.

#### **Western Archives Institute:**

The Western Archives Institute (WAI) has been holding intensive, two-week-long summer institutes to teach basic archival principles and practices since the summer of 1987. The past five WAIs have been had a full complement of students. The WAI is intended for those who are not in a position to seek a master of arts degree or are supplementing a masters degree in some discipline other than archives. The WAI is administered by the Western Archives Institute Joint Management Committee which includes representatives from both WAI sponsors, the Society of California Archivists (SCA) and the California State Archives, as well as the WAI's current on-site and local arrangements coordinators. Periodically, task forces have been appointed to review various aspects of the WAI, such as its curriculum or mission. The relationship between the CSA, the Society of California Archivists, and the WAI has worked well over the past fourteen years, with changes in organization, management, and curriculum being made as needed. The WAI has been increasingly successful throughout the years it has existed. Since the WAI enjoys continuous oversight and advice from both the SCA and the CSA, it would be redundant to provide an assessment of the WAI in this report. Suffice it to say that the WAI fulfills a valuable purpose for archival education in the western United States and that the ongoing support of the CSA is both worthwhile and necessary.

#### ***RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES:***

The State Archives, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California State Library share responsibility for preserving California's history and its records. Despite these common areas of interest, the relationship between the State Archives and these state agencies was extremely tense as recently as three years ago. That tension

continues, although it appears to be lessening now that Archives management is focused on improving its connection to these agencies. Some sources of this tension are discussed above (i.e., the reaction to the unprocessed backlog and the perception of what the Archives will do with agency records). A major source of tension in recent years has been the planning and launching of the Golden State Museum. Agencies responsible for documenting, preserving, and making various aspects of California's history and the associated artifacts and records available to the public perceived the Golden State Museum as a threat.

Prior to the establishment of the Golden State Museum, the collection policy of the affected agencies was clear: The Archives would collect the records of state government, the Parks Department would collect artifacts and record material from other sources that documented historical sites in California, and the State Library would collect local and state government publications and published materials related to California's history. Although there was always some overlap, it was not significant. The addition of the Golden State Museum to this mix upset the balance between the agencies. The Golden State Museum was perceived as an adjunct of the Archives that would cause the Archives to begin collecting materials that had previously been collected by the other agencies. In short, the Archives appeared to be invading the other agencies' territory. The Archives has worked to reassure State Parks and Recreation and the State Library by emphasizing that the Museum would not establish its own collection, rather it would serve as a venue where state owned items from various agency collections could be interpreted and displayed.

While the Golden State Museum has not affected the working relationship between the Archives and the DGS Records Management Program, that relationship has also needed improvement in recent years. In the past decade, the Records Management Program has undergone several organizational changes that have decreased its effectiveness at managing the records of state government. This in turn has made the appraisal and collecting activities of the State Archives more difficult. To increase the effectiveness of both agencies, the Archives' appraisal archivists are making a concerted effort to work more closely with DGS Records Management.

### **Golden State Museum:**

The Golden State Museum is an outgrowth of the concept that the State Archives should have a place to exhibit its collections. When the CSA was located in the original State Archives building at 1020 "O" Street, the Archives had a small exhibit area. An archives museum intended to replace the small exhibit area was planned into the design for the new CSA facility. As planning for the new museum progressed, the scope and definition of the museum expanded from a museum of the archives to a museum of California. Because California did not have a state museum and the Secretary of State has broadly defined responsibility for the state's history, it seemed appropriate to establish such a museum in the Secretary of State's building. The Golden State Museum, as it now exists, is located on the lower two floors of the CSA facility as a museum of California history and is organized as a private, non-profit, public benefit corporation. The Museum

receives no operating funds from the state; all its funding is private, except for in-kind and collection assistance from the Archives. The Museum is thus not part of the CSA organization, although the two entities work closely together. The Museum depends on the Archives for building maintenance, collection development and management, and exhibit preparation and monitoring.

The Museum does not have its own collection and its exhibits are drawn from various sources, but the Archives collection provides the majority of the Museum's exhibit items. Items (especially three-dimensional items) collected for the Museum are accessioned into the CSA collections by archivists using accession numbers that designate the materials as being for the Museum rather than the Archives. By using this procedure, the state ensures that the collections become state property, not private property. Since the materials collected for the Museum are stored in the State Archives stacks and are part of the Archives collection, the Archives also provides curatorial care for these materials. One archivist is specifically charged with working with the Museum collection and curating some of the Museum exhibits, such as the exhibit now in the Mezzanine. Exhibit preparation is another area in which the Museum depends on the Archives. The Museum does not have an exhibit shop; much of the mounting of exhibit materials is conducted in the preservation lab by the document preservation technicians. Since the Archives has the ability to mount exhibits, it may eventually be responsible for developing exhibits for the Museum.

The Golden State Museum, as currently conceived, staffed, designed, and operated faces numerous challenges. The change in the Museum's vision (from archives museum to museum of California) meant that numerous other aspects of the Museum also needed to change. This did not happen as completely as was necessary to ensure the Museum's success. One example of this incomplete transition is the way the Museum was marketed to the public. To successfully launch a new museum, it is necessary to have an extensive public advertising campaign and a public opening that attracts extensive media attention. Neither of these marketing tools were used to announce the Museum's launch. Instead, the Museum was launched in the same way a new internal (as opposed to public) government program would be launched.

The location of the Museum in the Archives building also presents the Museum with a challenge. This location would have been ideal, had the Museum remained a museum of the archives. In many ways it is still ideal - the facility is new and well-designed, the Museum exhibit spaces are large and versatile, and the Archives provides many services to the Museum. Parking, however, is a real problem. Identifying sufficient, nearby, public parking should be a priority. One step has already been taken in this direction, in that the Museum has been given permission to use the parking lot across "O" Street on weekends. Some provision will also need to be made to accommodate visitor parking on the other days of the week. Building signage is also a problem for the Museum, because the Museum is not clearly identified on the street entrance, nor does that entrance attract people into the Museum. The building looks like a government building (albeit an extremely nice government building), not like a public facility.

To complete its transition into the museum of California, the Museum needs to revise its plan. The plan should realistically state how the Museum will market itself to its intended audience, as well as what staffing and funding resources the Museum will need to accomplish its vision. The Museum's board has stated that schools should be the primary user of the Museum, but that the Museum should also be accessible to a broad cross section of the public. The Museum anticipates that it will be serving 150,000 visitors annually. For this many visitors to find the Museum, a concerted marketing effort will be necessary. This marketing effort can also be of help to the Archives, since some level of cooperative marketing and outreach would benefit both the Museum and the Archives. Additional staffing and funding resources will be necessary to expand Museum programs to accommodate the anticipated visitorship. Museum staff currently consists of the Museum director, a museum educator, one other staff person, and interns. The archivist/curator position is empty. To expand the educational and exhibits programs of the Museum will require additional staff members. The Museum would also benefit from the hiring of a staff person in charge of development. Such an individual would help to acquire the additional operating budget that will be needed to expand the Museum's programs.

The existing budget/funding has no provision for repairing, replacing, or updating the exhibits and associated technology. To attract repeat visitors, the Museum will need to ensure that all the technology is working and that there are new exhibits for visitors to enjoy. Educational programs aimed at a state-wide audience also require additional funding. The Museum is in something of a "Catch 22" situation: to attract sufficient private funding to ensure successful programs and exhibits, the Museum needs to demonstrate that it is already successful; to become successful, it needs additional funding. Some level of state funding to support Museum operations may be necessary at least in the short-term to allow the Museum to attract a higher level of private funding.

The revised Museum plan should reevaluate the exhibit program. The exhibits currently installed in the Museum are impressive, but seem to emphasize superficial visual and auditory presentation and style over substance in terms of story-line and context. The best example of this is the exhibit that features a debate between John Muir and Gifford Pinchot. It is likely that the Audioguide provided the historical context needed to understand the debate. For various reasons, however, many visitors may not wish to use the Audioguide and the Museum does not provide them with options such as explanatory labels. Such visitors will be left wondering what that cabin exhibit was all about. The exhibits are clearly designed to appeal to the visitor raised on television and the Internet, not on reading. While this is probably realistic, especially if the intended audience is composed primarily of school children, it does little to attract the parents of many of those children, who might prefer more in depth and nuanced information that does not depend on an Audioguide. In many cases, the exhibits seem to engage the senses, but not the brain.

Exhibit maintenance and replacement also needs to be considered by a revised Museum plan. Almost all the exhibits are dependent on complicated and expensive technology, yet the Museum has no real plans for coping with broken or outdated

technology. This should be a priority, since nothing is less attractive to visitors than exhibits that are out-of-order or appear dated. During the site visit in July, several exhibit-related problems were noted. The technology on at least two of the exhibits did not function correctly. In some areas of the Museum, the level of sound from one exhibit made it difficult to hear the presentation at neighboring exhibits. Several of the exhibits suffered from “shop-worn” labels and exhibit design elements. Visitors tend to react negatively to out-of-order, worn, or unprofessional-appearing exhibit elements. The drawers containing archival materials that provide supplementary information through the use of primary sources are a very good idea. To use these to their full potential, however, the Museum must change out the archival materials occasionally, so that there will be new items for repeat visitors to see and think about. At present, no attention is being given to replacing archival materials periodically. The Museum also needs to plan to replace entire exhibits in a few years. Nothing dates a Museum more quickly than the concept of “permanent” exhibits.

Despite the challenges facing the Golden State Museum, it has great potential. The Museum is in a spacious, attractive, and versatile facility. The collections on which its exhibits depend have great depth and diversity. There is a definite need for a museum to interpret California’s “place, people, promise, and politics,” as the Museum’s four galleries attempt to do. Once a revised plan clarifies the Museum’s mission, it will become a real asset to the state of California.

### **California State Library:**

The California State Library has a three-part mission. It serves the information needs of state government through its law library, government publications, books for the blind, and California Research Bureau which prepares reports for the governor’s office and legislative offices. It also provides library development services to public libraries in the state by dispensing federal Library Services and Technology Act grants, overseeing bonds to build libraries, and sponsoring the “Library of California” to try to get all the state’s libraries working together. Finally, the State Library has a special collections department consisting of the California History Collection, the general rare book collection, the Sutro Library in San Francisco, and an in-house preservation lab. The California History Collection documents California’s history by attempting to collect every work of California history and every novel with a California setting, subscribing to approximately 600 California magazines and newspapers in every county, providing general reference through national newspapers, collecting city directories and “Great Registers of Voters,” collecting non-government, published maps of California including road maps and Thomas Brothers Guides (there are approximately 4000 maps in the collection), collecting ephemera such as campaign literature and California chamber of commerce materials, collecting photographs (more than 300,000 photographs are in the collection), and collecting the personal papers of individuals and institutions. These special collections are housed under optimum (and regularly monitored) environmental and security conditions. Researchers using the collections must follow similar rules as in the Archives reference room.

The State Library focuses its collecting efforts on the private sector, so as not to overlap with the State Archives. The Library and Archives also cooperate in other areas. When gubernatorial collections come to the Archives as required by law, the Archives retains the gubernatorial papers, while transferring the governor's private papers to the Library. The Library in turn sends duplicate publications of state agencies, legal and professional reference materials, and a few California history materials to the Archives' to be included in the reference collection of the Staff Library. If the Archives finds publications while accessioning or processing the Archives' collections, it may retain some items in the Staff Library, but will send most publications to the State Library. Additionally, the Library and the Archives occasionally cooperate in mounting exhibits.

The State Library's main area of concern regarding its interaction with the State Archives is the Golden State Museum. The establishment of the Golden State Museum changed the thrust of the Archives' collecting activities. The Archives now concentrates more on collecting visually interesting materials than was the case in the past. This new collecting focus raises the possibility that the State Archives may encroach on the interests of the State Library. The State Library sees this as an issue that should be resolved between the two organizations.

### **California Department of Parks and Recreation:**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) manages over 260 park units, which contain a diverse collection of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The DPR's statewide collection is the aggregate of all the individual park collections and those housed in the State Museum Resource Center in West Sacramento. According to the DPR's most recent estimate, in 1998 the statewide collection contained as many as 750,000 three-dimensional museum objects, 1.6 million archival/library/photographic objects, and two million archeological objects. Approximately 125 park units have museum collections that are housed in over 600 different structures. The DPR is currently engaged in assessing its collections to plan for improvements in collection management that benefit both access and preservation. Three years ago the DPR appointed an "Organizational Memory Team" to assess the problems associated with the Department's historical records and to propose solutions. Several of the changes being considered would affect the interaction between Parks and Recreation and the State Archives.

Management of the DPR's diverse and numerous collections presents the Department with numerous problems, not least among which are staffing and funding. During the recession of the early 1990s, the DPR was unable to hire as many curatorial and interpretive personnel as required by the number and size of both sites and collections. Now that California's economy has recovered, the DPR is working to reduce the staffing deficit. The DPR is also establishing performance measures for park superintendents that evaluate the level of curatorial care and management received by their parks' historical collections so that superintendents will view collections care as a priority. Improving public access to collections is as much of a priority as improving collections management. Parks and Recreation only has two public libraries/archives in the system,

the photograph archives at the State Museum Resources Center in West Sacramento and the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The historical collections at other sites are only available by appointment. Usually appointments must be made with rangers who are frequently only available in the off-season. Some repositories are closed and thus unavailable during portions of the year, such as the Antelope Valley Indian Museum that is closed between mid-June and mid-September. Access is also difficult, because collections are often unprocessed and little-known.

In addition to preserving its statewide collections, the DPR is concerned with preserving its organizational memory. Approximately three years ago, the DPR undertook the “Organizational Memory Project” to assess problems involved in preserving the Department of Parks and Recreation’s history and to recommend proposals for solving those problems. In its recommended solutions submitted to the DPR in September of 1998, the “Organizational Memory Team” made several proposals. The primary thrust of these proposals focused on the centralization (where possible) of departmental records in a DPR-operated facility. The team recommended that the library/archives be located in headquarters and be staffed by a professional archivist. Under these proposals, the Department’s historical records would be collected, arranged, described, preserved, and made available by the DPR itself to ensure the documentation of the history of parks and recreation in California. The Department is particularly interested in using its records to document changes in its organizational culture (i.e., rangers as law enforcers v. rangers as naturalists/interpreters or a centralized v. a decentralized organization), as well as the development of national movements related to camping, recreation, wilderness, and the environment. At present, the DPR’s records are scattered in a variety of locations. The most important departmental records are stored in the Department filing room in headquarters. Other significant records are at the State Records Center under “permanent” retention. Some records, as well as a large photograph collection are located at the State Museum Resources Center in West Sacramento. Individual park sites store records and other materials in warehouses all over the state. The State Archives also holds both processed and unprocessed DPR records.

The relationship between the DPR and the State Archives is complicated, although increasingly cordial. The major areas of tension between the DPR and the Archives relate to questions about CSA appraisal priorities, the issue of departmental records in the Archives’ unprocessed backlog, and the Golden State Museum. The criteria used by the CSA to appraise records are unclear to the DPR. The Department is concerned that appraisal archivists consider records historically significant only because they document legal and policy issues, rather than because they document issues of social and environmental history. Based on this perception, the DPR believes that the CSA’s appraisal focus does not meet the Department’s needs. As a result, the DPR would find it more helpful to have Department staff flag records on retention schedules as having historical significance, than to have CSA archivists perform this task. Given this perception, it is clear that the efforts of CSA’s appraisal archivists to build closer relationships with agency staff and to spend more time on explaining CSA’s goals is appropriate and necessary. State agencies’ unwillingness to transfer historical records to



the Archives and their distrust of the decisions made by CSA's archivists regarding the value of agency records, will undercut the Archives' mission.

In addition to clarifying appraisal policies, another major step toward improving the relationship between the DPR and the Archives would be for the Archives to begin processing the Department's records in the unprocessed backlog and to prepare and distribute a finding aid to these records. The DPR is concerned that departmental records transferred to the State Archives in the mid-1970s are still not processed. The Department lacks information regarding the content of these records and is becoming increasingly anxious that these records be processed and that finding aids be produced. According to the Archives' location file, DPR records include several significant collections of records, including the Olmsted Papers, records concerning the restoration of the Capital, records concerning environmental issues, and DPR administrative records that would likely document the Department's history. These papers are a processing priority for the Archives, due to the significance of the information they contain, as well as because they are requested frequently by researchers.

The Golden State Museum is another source of tension between the State Archives and the DPR. The Department of Parks and Recreation perceives the Golden State Museum as being part of the Archives and sees it as an encroachment on the Department's collecting mission. There was no conflict in collecting interests when the CSA collected only the records of state government. This has changed, now that the Archives is also collecting three-dimensional materials for the Museum. To minimize the overlap in collecting areas, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Archives, and the State Library should cooperate in reviewing and revising their collecting policies. The three organizations need to agree on the parameters of their individual collecting areas so that they can reach a mutual understanding and enhance cooperation. The State Archives, State Library, and State Department of Parks and Recreation are natural allies in state government, so it is important that causes of tension between them are reduced.

### **California Department of General Services Records Management Program:**

The Records Management Program is a unit within the Procurement Division of the California Department of General Services. Other units include the State Records Center and the Document Imaging Program. The Records Management Program sees its role as coordinating state records functions and setting overall records policies. Agencies are responsible for conducting records management inventories, creating records retention and disposition schedules, submitting their schedules to Records Management for approval, sending inactive records to the State Records Center, and ensuring that records are not destroyed without being reviewed by archivists. The Records Management Program assists state agencies in conducting these activities and pays particular attention that newly-created units of government are trained to meet the state's records management requirements. Records Management has guidelines that require agencies to inventory their records every five years so that schedules can be updated; most departments have schedules, but only approximately fifty percent are current.

Records Management Program staff is working on creating a database that will show the status of records scheduling in each agency. Staff then hopes to translate that information into a graphic representation of each agency's status (i.e., red for non-current agencies; green for current agencies) to be posted on a Web site. Most state agencies store records in the records center (approximately 800,000 cubic feet of records at present). The State Records Center is a full-service center that provides state agencies with a twenty-four hour turn-around time on records requests and a document destruction center where state government's confidential records are shredded and other records are recycled.

Each agency is required to appoint a records coordinator at the analyst level to work with the DGS Records Management Program. The coordinator oversees the agency's records management activities, including the creation of records schedules, the transfer of records to the records center, and the training of other agency staff in records management procedures. Records Management is also working on establishing state standards for electronic records retention and for imaging to go along with the microfilming standards it has already established, as well as on providing training in understanding and applying these standards.

Records Management staff also works with local governments, school districts, and special districts to answer their records management questions, to provide training, and to provide information about records consultants. To facilitate the latter function, the Records Management program has established a Master Services Agreement that pre-qualifies and lists records consultants. Local and state government agencies can hire consultants on this list. The Records Management Program also attempts to provide information on records management in their annual records management and imaging forums for state government that showcase the latest trends and issues in records technology. Speakers at these forums are leading records managers and vendors. The forum provides a valuable educational opportunity for state government.

The Records Management Program's main interaction with the Archives is with the appraisal archivists who meet with Program staff, review retention schedules to identify historically significant records series, review records prior to destruction, and participate in the training of agency records coordinators. In the recent past, the appraisal archivists have taken greater initiative to ensure that the interaction is ongoing and active. In this way, they hope that the Archives will be better able to facilitate the identification and transfer of historical records. One major challenge to the smooth functioning of this process is that the Records Management Program has lost a large measure of its clout with state agencies in the past decade due to its movement downward in the state's organizational hierarchy.

Prior to 1991, the Records Management Program was an independent division within the Department of General Services. It is now a unit of the Procurement Division and as such, is less effective at gaining access to the executive-level agency management without whose support a records management program cannot function. The Program is currently engaged in an effort to recombine with the imaging program to increase its visibility. A recent positive step was the moving of the Program's offices from the State

Records Center to a more central location. To further increase the Program's clout, Program staff is attempting to obtain a memorandum signed by Governor Davis regarding the necessity of compliance with the state-mandated records program. This memorandum would be sent to secretaries and undersecretaries in each agency.

The overlapping responsibilities of the State Archives and the Records Management Program also impede cooperation. A bill being sponsored by State Senator Debra Bowen which would place electronic records standards in the Secretary of State's Office is viewed by Records Management as an encroachment on their responsibilities. Another bill in search of a sponsor would return records management responsibility to the Secretary of State's Office (where it was until 1963). Last year a bill passed into law that authorized the establishment of a local government records program to be administered by the State Archives and to provide records retention and archival support to local governments. Such a program to assist local governments with their records needs also overlaps with the Records Management Program's efforts to help local governments.

The most important challenge facing both the Records Management Program and the State Archives is the fact that California's records laws (the Public Records Act; the State Records Management Act) have no teeth that would force state agencies to comply with their provisions. No negative consequences follow for state agencies that refuse to prepare records retention and destruction schedules, refuse to transfer historical records to the Archives, or destroy historical records. The only solution to this problem is to revise state records legislation. Many attempts have been made, but so far, success is elusive.

### ***SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:***

To assume its rightful place as the chief archival organization in the state of California and to serve as a model for and assist local government records programs throughout the state, the California State Archives should consider making the following changes in its budget allocation, staffing, program operations, and interaction with other state agencies/organizations.

#### **Assessioning/Processing:**

- CSA staff should fully implement the "Collections Management Procedures Manual" to ensure that accessioning tasks are completed consistently and properly so that the CSA's unprocessed collections are adequately documented.
- CSA management and staff should investigate whether bar coding all CSA collections at the box level would cost-effectively allow the Archives to establish a universal identification system for its collections and permit a higher level of physical and intellectual control.
- CSA management should make reducing the unprocessed backlog of collections a top priority. This is necessary so that the Archives can gain better control over its

collections, provide better reference service, make better appraisal decisions, and regain the trust and cooperation of other state agencies. To reduce the unprocessed backlog of records, CSA needs to:

- place the unprocessed collections in priority order
  - write a processing procedures manual to provide clear and detailed guidance to processors
  - hire experienced additional staff or contractors to process records
  - provide training for new and current staff in processing procedures
  - mandate that all archivists work a set number of hours per week on processing tasks, as they now do at the reference desk
  - consider processing some of the larger collections first to encourage a team approach to processing and to shrink the backlog more rapidly
- As an adjunct to processing, archivists should focus more attention on the preparation and distribution of finding aids. Steps to improve finding aids should include:
    - drafting detailed finding aids preparation procedures as part of a processing manual
    - including scope and content notes in finding aids to ensure that the CSA's finding aids meet archival standards
    - providing access to finding aids by uploading them to the Internet
    - providing access to finding aids by distributing them to affected state agencies

#### **Administration:**

- CSA management should work with the Secretary of State to implement the 1999 "Classification Study of the California State Archives." Recommendations in the study included:
  - adding a "Senior Archivist" (specialist or supervisory) class to the CSA organization
  - adding a paraprofessional class to the CSA organization
  - eliminating the rotation of archivists between programs
- CSA management should reallocate office space in order to encourage a team approach in Archives programs. Two options are to:
  - reconfigure the design of fourth floor south offices and collateral spaces to accommodate all archivist offices. The staff lunch room and one or more collateral spaces would be moved to fourth floor north under this scheme
  - follow the original office allocation scheme and reassign offices by classification if the senior archivist class is introduced

**Appraisal:**

- Appraisal archivists should work with DGS Records Management and state agencies to establish a system that allows them to identify and mark historical records at the point of creation.
- Appraisal archivists should continue to seek a closer relationship to agency records coordinators so that the records coordinators can be encouraged to update agency records retention and disposition schedules.
- CSA as a whole, and appraisal archivists in particular, should establish a program to educate agency staff about the role of the CSA in records management and appraisal. Archivists should clarify for agency staff what criteria are used to determine records' historical significance.
- The recommendations of the Appraisal Task Force should be further investigated and implemented in the coming year or two. The information systems model should receive particular attention, as the appraisal of electronic records gains urgency with each passing year.
- The CSA needs to become more involved in working with DGS Records Management to set standards for the retention of electronic records.

**Automation:**

- When the planned integrated automated archival system is implemented, the CSA should consider whether:
  - additional information technology staff is required to implement the system
  - the CSA should continue providing information to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), or whether the system's EAD coding capability should be used to code Archives' finding aids for uploading to the Internet
  - imaging/digitization capability should be added to the automated system. Prior to implementation of records digitization activities, the CSA should consider its digitization goals, whether to centralize or distribute digitization, and appropriate uses for digitization given the uncertainty about the medium's longevity.
- The CSA should work with the Secretary of State to ensure that all CSA staff gain access to up-to-date hardware and software (i.e., accounting and MS Office software and hardware to support them).

**Preservation:**

- The CSA should isolate collections that arrive in dirty or otherwise suspect condition until it can be determined whether mold or vermin infestations are present.
- The silver halide master reels and the diazo duplicate reels of microfilm should be stored separately, preferably in different buildings, to ensure that a disaster does not destroy both.
- The CSA should establish a preservation program consisting of the preservation and microfilm laboratories under the supervision of a preservation curator (preferably a paper conservator) at the senior archivist level. The preservation program should be at the same organizational level as other CSA programs (i.e., legislative records and accessioning/processing). This would ensure the strengthening of the preservation function at the CSA and the reestablishment of a balance between the twin imperatives of access and preservation. Such a reorganization would also serve to reintegrate the preservation and microfilm laboratories into the overall program of the CSA. The curator should take responsibility for division-wide preservation tasks including drafting an annual preservation plan and a disaster preparedness and recovery plan for the CSA, to supplement the business recovery plan currently in effect for Secretary of State divisions. Other steps the preservation program should consider taking are to:
  - provide contract microfilming and preservation services to other state agencies and the public
  - take on an educational role by training new microfilm and preservation technicians
  - forge a link with a local university to train students in the art and science of preservation
  - hire additional microfilming and preservation staff to support current and additional program activities
  - provide microfilming and preservation staff with training opportunities so that they can grow along with the preservation program
  - train reference staff (particularly those engaged in photocopying activities) and researchers in the proper handling of archival materials and direct them to bring preservation problems to the attention of preservation staff before extensive damage to records has occurred
  - microfilm legislative intent and other records that are repeatedly photocopied to save wear and tear from handling and light damage from photocopying
  - consider hiring a book binder to treat damaged bound volumes in the CSA's collection and to assist the Oral History Program by reproducing and binding oral history transcripts inhouse
  - work with CSA management to provide a water detection system throughout stack areas or to raise the lowest shelves an additional two inches to the standard six inches above floor level

**Oral History:**

- The Oral History Program should be returned to full operation. Prior to taking this step, the CSA should:
  - review the focus and priorities of the program
  - reevaluate the thematic areas to be documented by interviews to include current scholarly research areas
  - determine whether the program coordinator should be an oral historian or an archivist with oral history experience
  - if an oral historian becomes the coordinator, determine whether the CSA should conduct some of its own interviews or whether it should continue contracting this work out to its partner institutions
  - investigate the options to identify the speediest and most cost-effective method for reproducing oral history transcripts; consider completing this work inhouse
  - identify ways to provide better access to the oral history transcripts and to broaden their use; consider on-line library cataloging databases and other methods of providing on-line access; contact university history departments
  - reevaluate the technology used by the program; consider whether high-quality cassette recorders can replace reel-to-reel equipment

**Reference:**

- The CSA should improve public service in the reference room by making improvements that would allow staff to use their time more effectively. These improvements might include:
  - assigning three staff members to the reference room during all open hours to ensure staff can both provide public service and collections security
  - minimizing staff time needed for legislative intent research by forming partnerships with the legal community and legislative intent research contractors
  - placing personal computers in the reference room to allow access to on-line catalogs and electronic records
  - implementing the job classification study recommendation that a paraprofessional class be established and delegating routine reference and security tasks to staff in this class, so that archivists can focus on more complex reference questions
  - allowing interested archivists to specialize in reference service, so that researchers would have the benefit of their experience
  - expand reference room hours; consider introducing Saturday hours
  - adding another security camera to monitor the back of the reference room to improve security

- improving access by identifying an outside organization to sponsor legislation to resolve the inconsistencies in the California Public Records Act

### **Security:**

- CSA management should work with the Secretary of State's Office to improve Archives security by vesting control over access to restricted Archives' areas in senior Archives staff. Security should be further improved by establishing procedures defining what should be done in the event that archival materials are discovered to be missing.

### **Golden State Museum:**

- CSA management, Golden State Museum management, the Secretary of State, and the California legislature and governor should work together to resolve Museum-related issues. Some steps that should be considered are to:
  - provide some level of public funding to support Museum operations, at least until sufficient private funding can be secured
  - revise the Museum's plan to realistically state how it will market itself to its intended audience and what staffing and funding resources will be needed to accomplish its vision
  - hire a Museum staff member to be in charge of Museum development
  - expand educational programs aimed at a state-wide audience
  - review the exhibit program and plan the regular replacement of old exhibits with new exhibits to attract repeat visitors and prevent exhibits from looking dated
  - ensure that all the exhibit technology is in working order
  - identify nearby public parking to accommodate museum visitors, not only on weekends, but also during the week

### **Relationships with State Library and Department of Parks and Recreation:**

- CSA management and archivists should continue to strive for an improved relationship with other state agencies. Steps that the Archives can take to accomplish an improved relationship include:
  - demonstrating that the Archives is making progress on processing agencies' backlogged collections and informing agencies of the processing priority of their agency's records (especially if the records have a high processing priority)
  - cooperating with the State Library and the Department of Parks and Recreation in reviewing and revising the collection policies of the three organizations to minimize the overlap in collecting areas and to reach agreement on the parameters of their individual collecting areas